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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 COLOMBO 000811

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STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID  
USAID/W FOR A/AID ANDREW NATSIOS, JBRAUSE  
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DCHA DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR WILLIAM  
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ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD  
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN  
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER  
GENEVA FOR USAID KYLOH  
ROME PASS FODAG  
NSC FOR MELINE  
CDR USPACOM FOR J3/J4/POLAD  
USEU PASS USEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [AEMR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA - EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS:  
USAID/DART SITREP #21 - VISIT TO JAFFNA

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Summary  
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1.The USAID/Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) field officer (FO) and USAID/Colombo Project Development Specialist (PDS) traveled to Jaffna from April 20 to 22 to monitor USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)-funded programs and review the progress of tsunami recovery efforts. Four months after the tsunami hit and the initial emergency response, recovery efforts are moving forward. International and national relief agencies were virtually unanimous in their positive assessment of aid coordination in Jaffna. The Government Agent (GA) for Jaffna received high marks from all UN agencies and NGOs interviewed for his robust engagement in the recovery and reconstruction process. Challenges in the shelter and livelihoods sector have held back greater progress in the recovery process. Specifically, uncertainty over the central government's ultimate intentions in relation to the buffer zone have left many key individuals (including local officials and aid agency personnel) in a position where they are hesitant to move forward rapidly. In addition, limited availability of land and the rising cost of property near the coastline have restricted the possibilities of re-building fishing communities near the sea. Aid agencies are finding that restoring livelihoods is more complicated than originally imagined. Efforts by individuals, villages, local fishermen's associations and possibly the LTTE to manipulate donations of aid to the fishing sector have given aid agencies pause in their efforts to work in this area. Some NGOs plan to conduct in-depth studies on livelihoods in order to understand the political, economic and social complexities of livelihood restoration in post-tsunami Jaffna. Aid agencies are also keenly aware of possible friction caused by disparities in assistance going to tsunami-affected displaced persons and the large number of conflict-affected persons resident in Jaffna. End summary.

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Coordination and Cooperation in Jaffna  
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2.All aid agencies interviewed during the course of the visit to Jaffna agreed that coordination between UN agencies, NGOS, local government and the LTTE was very good. Special praise was given to the government agent (GA) for Jaffna district for being engaged and supportive of relief efforts. It was also noted that collaboration between the GA, the force commander of the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE on relief and recovery interventions in Jaffna has been relatively positive and productive. One senior relief official explained this cooperation as the joint mechanism already in progress.

3.While other tsunami-affected districts such as Ampara and Galle suffer from coordination problems brought on by a huge influx of NGOs and

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individuals involved in recovery operations, Jaffna has been largely spared from the chaos and competition between too many aid agencies trying to work in the same area. In a sense, Jaffna was better placed to cope with the immediate emergency needs triggered by the tsunami and subsequent recovery efforts due to the presence of a number of aid agencies already working with conflict-affected populations. The UN agencies, NGOs and international organizations already in place in Jaffna responded immediately to the tsunami thereby leaving relatively few gaps that required coverage by others. Already knowing each other and their respective agencies' capacities, the relief groups were able to forge ahead quickly based on the strength of existing staff and materials in Jaffna. The small number of NGOs that set up operations in Jaffna after the tsunami was folded into the already existing coordination structures.

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Shelter for the Tsunami Displaced: Progress and Challenges  
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4. Aid agencies and local government officials noted that virtually all tsunami-displaced persons in Jaffna district have found adequate accommodation with family and friends or have received transitional shelters while they wait for permanent housing solutions. USAID staff visited a transitional housing site at Manatkadu built with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, UNICEF and Action Contre Le Faim (ACF)). The site houses 232 families who were forced to abandon their coastal homes roughly 3 kilometers from their transitional camp due to damage caused by the tsunami. All basic facilities are in place including shelters, latrines, water points, and garbage collection bins. In addition, UNICEF has funded recreational programs for the children of the transitional center

5. The government in Jaffna has already  
y allocated land for the building of permanent homes for the 232 families of Manatkadu. Fortunately, the government owned land directly behind the existing village and donated this land for the new houses that will be built beyond the 200 meter buffer zone. Housing plots had been staked out at the new site although the building process has yet to begin. The Grama Sewaka (GS) for Manatkadu admitted that he was confused over the government's intentions for rebuilding on these new plots and the policy linked to the buffer zone. This uncertainty over central government policy and plans had led to delays in finding permanent housing solutions.

6. Finding land close to the sea will be more problematic in Point Pedro, the division hardest hit by the tsunami in Jaffna district. Point Pedro is densely populated and land is at a premium. The task of identifying available land for the 3,875 households displaced by the tsunami at Point Pedro will take some time given the government's intent to establish a 200-meter buffer zone. Several sources in Jaffna indicated that prices for land outside the buffer zone, yet near the sea have sky-rocketed due to the huge demand and limited land available. Comment: As in many other parts of the country hit by the tsunami, the government edict against rebuilding

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homes in the buffer zone along with the scarcity of land near the sea for communities tied to the sea for economic activities will cause lengthy delays in the construction of permanent homes for those people whose former homes fall within the buffer zone. End comment.

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Livelihoods Restoration: Not Always So Simple  
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7. While visiting the transitional shelter site at Manatkadu, USAID staff observed a number of new fishing boats adjacent to the road, approximately 3 kilometers from the sea. Men from Manatkadu informed USAID staff that they received 10 boats

from the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in February. Two months later, the boats still lay idle. USAID staff heard several explanations for the unused boats. The inhabitants of Manatkadu themselves stated that they had decided that they would not use these 10 boats as they represented 25 percent of the boats lost by the village. They did not feel that it would be fair for the recipients of the 10 GTZ boats to start fishing until the other 30 fisherman had received new boats as well. One aid agency received information that the fisherman's association had ordered those individuals with boats to leave them on land until all requests for new boats in the village had been met.

8.(SBU) A local source in Jaffna informed USAID staff that the boats lay idle under instructions from the LTTE. According to this individual, the LTTE lost many of its boats during the tsunami and is now seeking to replace them. It is believed that the LTTE commanded the fisherman's association and villagers to inflate the requirements for boats beyond what the village had lost to the tsunami in order to receive an allocation of boats for the LTTE. The LTTE ordered the local fisherman's association to keep the boats out of the water until demands for additional boats had been met by donors. Note: This information was provided by one source and could not be corroborated. End Note.

9.The main focus of relief agencies involved in livelihood restoration is on the fishing sector with many NGOs rushing to purchase boats for affected communities based on requests from individuals or fishing associations. However, some NGOs are wary that individuals, villages and the fisherman's association have inflated the requirements for boats beyond the actual number destroyed by the tsunami for economic gain. Many households along the coast make their living from fishing, but a relatively small percentage of the households actually owned boats. Many individuals work in ancillary activities such as mending nets or drying fish. Boat owners tend to earn a significantly higher income than those individuals involved in other tasks related to fishing. It is believed that many individuals who had not previously owned boats prior to the tsunami will now claim to have lost boats in order to receive a free boat and thus increase their income opportunities. Some NGOs are worried that the economic and social network of fishing communities could be negatively affected by the over-provision of boats. In addition, the environment could suffer if the number of boats on the sea increases dramatically in certain areas. These NGOs are not taking the requests at face value, but are conducting studies and engaging in dialogue with the community and its leaders to chart the best course for the design and implementation of livelihoods activities.

10.While much of the focus in the livelihoods sector has been on the fishing industry, relief agencies in Jaffna noted that attention must be paid to farmers as well. Large areas of farmland along the western coast (including islands) of Jaffna district were flooded with sea water. The water eventually drained from the fields, leaving salt residue in the soil that will have a negative impact on the ability of farmers to produce during the coming planting seasons. Some NGOs are starting to look at this problem and seek creative solutions to support them while their fields remain crippled by salt in the soil.

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Continuing Work with Conflict Displaced of Jaffna  
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11.One recurring theme among the many aid agencies interviewed during the trip to Jaffna was the need for equity when working with both tsunami-displaced and conflict-displaced

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communities. Staff and material resources had been initially diverted to deal with the emergency phase of the tsunami response. Several months into the recovery phase, UN agencies, NGOs and international organizations strive to find a balance between serving their long-term, conflict-affected beneficiaries and helping the tsunami-affected population to recover. One impediment to

evenhanded assistance to both groups in Jaffna is the huge amount of financial resources allocated for the tsunami-affected households and communities. If there is a great gap between the level of assistance provided to the tsunami displaced and the conflict displaced, there are concerns that frictions could develop. Agencies are looking for community development or infrastructure projects that can potentially benefit both groups. Another solution would be to gain permission for donors (governmental and private) to use a portion of the massive funds collected for tsunami relief to support programs to improve conditions for conflict affected households as well. As an example, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is discussing a proposed \$1 million grant with the GOSL that combines assistance to conflict-affected populations with new funds to reconstruct tsunami affected communities.

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